

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR PATRICK LA PINE  
APPOINTEE TO THE FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

1. What goals would you like to achieve during your time on the board? **Ferris State University (FSU) is one of the fastest growing public universities in Michigan and also has one of the highest graduation placement rates. Clearly the University is doing something right. But in today's changing Michigan economy and budget constraints, it is time for universities to rethink their strategic plans to reflect these new realities. During my time on the board, I would like to work on charting a new long-term strategic vision for the University. Additionally, Ferris is facing a great deal of internal turmoil between the administration and its faculty union. I hope to assist in bridging a better working relationship between the administration/board and the entire University community.**
2. In your discussions with the governor's office prior to your appointment, what was the general charge given to you? **There wasn't any general charge given to me by the governor or anyone within her administration.**
3. Over the last 15 or 20 years it seems that all state universities have been expanding programs to try to offer everything to everyone. Do you think this is a good idea? **Generally no. I think university and state resources are better spent on specific degree programs versus general degrees. For example, Ferris is well known for its optometry, pharmacy and technology-related programs. The board just approved a new Bachelor of Science in Information Security and Intelligence degree. FSU will be the first university in the nation to have this type of degree program. Employment outlooks indicate that security will continue to have one of the strongest employment growth outlooks of all career options. In my opinion, universities must continually be reevaluating its degree offerings to reflect changes in the economy as well as its "niche" in the post-secondary marketplace.**
4. There is a proposal to separate funding of the State's three largest universities from the other twelve universities. Should the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University be funded separately? **Michigan has 15 outstanding public universities. Creating an artificial division between them only diminishes the many accomplishments and good works of the other 12 universities both in the minds of policymakers and the general public.**
5. Under what circumstances would you vote to increase tuition at your school? **Whenever possible tuition should be keep at either the rate of inflation or at the rate of increase in state support, whichever is less. For example, this year Governor Granholm has proposed a 2.5% increase in funding**

for public universities for 2007-08 fiscal year. In the current state economic environment, universities need to tighten their belts, just as the state and families have been forced to do.

6. Do you think your university has done a good job of controlling costs? Where would you find additional cost savings? **As a recently appointed board member, it is too soon for me to make an educated assessment in this area. However, I would be interested in seeing public universities through the President's Council start a dialogue about service consolidation like what has been proposed for local units of government and school districts.**
7. What type of outcomes should the university measure to determine if it is being successful? (i.e. graduation rates, how long it took to graduate, job placement in the graduates major, etc.) Does your university currently do anything like this? **Measuring success in public universities is not an exact science. Graduation and placement rates are easy benchmarks to track and report on, which all universities do. Other factors I think should be considered include cost of education, student to instructor ratios and minority enrollment/graduation rates.**

To this point, Ferris has just moved from the fourth to the third tier in the *U.S. News and World News* college rankings among master's institutions in the Midwest. Among the strengths that the magazine notes, Ferris ranks high on class size. 50% of our classes have fewer than 20 students, placing us in the top 75 of all schools in the Midwest. Only 3% of our classes have more than 50 students. Our student-to-faculty ratio is 15:1. Ferris ranks high in the percentage of full-time faculty, 86%, 9th highest in the tier. We also received high rankings in terms of student financial support. The average amount of debt for a Ferris graduating student, \$15,000, is the lowest reported for a Michigan public master's university. We also fared well in terms of the student financial support we provide. The average Ferris student receives \$8,000 in aid (\$3,500 in need-based aid, \$3,500 in a need-based loan, and \$2,000 in merit awards). This is the 7th highest of Midwest public master's universities. These data reflect the importance Ferris places upon student-faculty interaction, high quality instruction, and support for students – all issues that should be measured.

8. What is your position on the importance of state universities as authorizers of charter public schools? **I think state universities can play an important role as authorizers of charter schools. In 1997, the FSU Board of Trustees conditionally authorized its first Public School Academy (PSA). The University currently has 16 contracts issued to academies around the State of Michigan. When Ferris authorizes a public school academy, we are envisioning a glimpse into the future. It is believed that each academy**

authorized will have a positive impact on: the lives of the children and parents they serve; the communities of the families they serve; the taxpayers of the State of Michigan; and ultimately, the societies of the world. I hope Ferris continues to look for more opportunities to create PSAs around the state as an alternative to low performing school districts.

9. What is your opinion of the new constitutional amendment banning the use of race and gender preferences in public university admissions? How will you ensure the amendment is implemented at your university? **On November 7, 2006 Proposal 2, also known as the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCRI), was approved by Michigan voters 58% to 42%. It is now incumbent on public universities, and their boards, to ensure compliance with the new law.**
10. In which areas of technological research does your university specialize? How effective is your school at commercializing this research to help grow the state's economy? **FSU does not engage in a great deal of research.**
11. Do you see postsecondary education as mainly a conduit to the work or is there intrinsic value to pursuing a higher education? **I believe a higher education helps create not only a highly skilled and employable worker, but also a well rounded citizen.**
12. Do you think that K-12 institutions are doing a good job preparing student for college? Why? **For many years, there had been a growing concern that public high schools in Michigan were not properly preparing students adequately for the challenges they would face in the workplace. Public Acts 123 and 124 of 2006 put into place a rigorous statewide graduation requirement to improve students' performance and raise expectations. This new mandatory curriculum for high school students will not start to be implemented until the 2008-09 school year. With passage of PA 123 and 124, I believe the state and Michigan Legislature has made great strides in helping to prepare graduating senior for both the workplace and college.**